

THE CITY OF THE ORPHANS.
From London Society.

The City of the Orphans is situated on Ashley Down, near Bristol, this down being a breezy eminence, on which, until lately, the farmer grazed his cattle. To trace the origin of this city we must go back to the year 1835, in which year a poor Prussian—George Muller, who was then living in Bristol, and who had come to England a few years before in connection with a missionary project—conceived that it was his duty to do something towards providing for the numerous orphans who are to be found in our large cities.

At the time that Mr. Muller began to think of this work, he was a minister to a small sect known as the Brethren and had for a fellow-labourer the late Henry Craik, the well-known Hebrew scholar, and brother of the late Professor Craik, author of the "Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties." Mr. Muller had no salary whatever in connection with his ministry, he and Mr. Craik had resolved not to accept a salary, but to leave their needs to be supplied as the Brethren voluntarily should decide.

This arrangement produced very curious results. Sometimes Mr. Muller was very well off, but, as he never made his wants known to anybody, and never, on principle, asked anybody for anything, his means were occasionally very low. On these occasions his outward appearance indicated the emptiness of his exchequer, and individual members of his congregation were in the habit, when they met him with a shabby coat on, of taking him to the tailor's and buying him a new one. But poverty never affected the cheerful spirit of George Muller. In March, 1836, he was living at No. 6 Wilson street, Bristol, and this house he resolved to transform into an orphanage. On the 15th of April he began to take the children in, and by the 18th of the following month he had for his guests no less than twenty-six orphan children who had lost both father and mother by death.

Mr. Muller's position was at this time a very remarkable one. He had no regular income himself, and was, in fact, a poor man. How was he to provide for the twenty-six orphans that he had taken into his house? He resolved to carry out the same principle in respect to the orphans as he had done in respect to himself, that is, never to ask anybody for assistance, and never to make it known publicly who had given him anything. If anybody sent him a present for the orphans, whether it was in money or goods, it was never acknowledged in connection with the donor's name, but only with initials.

Persons who gave for mere ostentation had consequently no chance of being advertised in connection with the orphanage; for, whether a large or small amount was given, nothing more than the donor's initials were made public.

Under these singular circumstances Mr. Muller opened his orphanage. Some people thought that the orphanage was a freak of fanaticism, and others predicted that an institution founded on such a principle could not exist. But others again, who saw what a large number of children Mr. Muller had to feed, sent him assistance in money, in flour, in draperies, &c.


Still there was a continual chorus of depreciators, who said the thing must fail; but, instead of heeding these Mr. Muller who found that more children were brought to him than could be accommodated in his house, he rented a second house, and in a short time he had this one as full as the first.

The wants of this orphan community were literally supplied from day to day by gifts from the public; but nobody was asked for anything. A family of fifty or sixty consumed a good deal of food; the amount for clothing them was no inconsiderable trifle; the rent of two houses involved expenses; and, as Mr. Muller had engaged nurses and teachers for the orphans, there was a further outlay in this direction.

It was no wonder that even persons who were friendly to the young institution should have doubts as to its endurance. There was no list of subscribers, no income of any kind except the promiscuous gifts of the public, who were never solicited to give. Mr. Muller, however, did not share these doubts. He relied solely on the efficacy of prayer, and believing that the care of orphans was a worthy work for a Christian minister, he had no doubt that the means of providing for the orphans would be forthcoming. Help came to him in the most extraordinary way. Many people whom he had never seen sent money for the support of the orphans, anonymous donors dropped cash and trinkets into his letter-box, and occasionally he had a considerable sum on hand. But still there were periods when Mr. Muller was down to his last penny, and did not know where he would obtain the next meal for his orphans. In these periods people said he had gone too far, and, while they were discussing what would become of the children at the break-up of the institution, Mr. Muller opened a third house, for boys, and took in more orphans. The fact was that, as the character of the institution became known, applications were made on behalf of orphans, and Mr. Muller, having these cases brought before him, was not disposed to refuse the children admission.

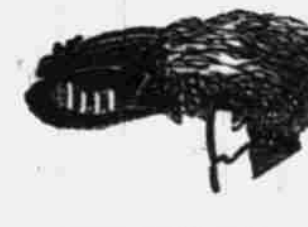
Ordinary prudence would have hesitated, but Mr. Muller seemed to lack this, depending solely on his prayer, and before the end of December, 1837, he had seventy-nine orphans under his care. Surely then it was time to stop. In July and August, 1838, Mr. Muller had frequently not a penny in hand; and, as he made it a rule never to go into debt, the necessities of the institution had to be supplied by the donations as they came in day by day and often hour by hour. At these times nearly everybody lost heart in the work except Mr. Muller. In his published "Narrative" referring to this period, we often find entries which show the extreme necessities of the institution; yet, strange to say, there was never a single instance in which the children lacked either food or clothing. Under the date August 15, 1838, for instance, we find: "I have not a penny in hand for the orphans." On August the 20 he was again "penniless." "To-day I was again without a single penny, when 43 was sent from Clapham, with a box of new clothes for the orphans." In the same year, on 21st of November, he makes this entry: "Never was so reduced in funds as to-day. There was not a single half-penny in hand between

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PURE NEATSFOOT OIL.
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